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Toward self-reliance and freedom

[United States?]

1912

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Sankey-Jones, Nancy Eleanor, 1862-
Toward self-reliance and freedom; verses selected by Nancy E. Sankey-Jones. 1912.
[20] p.

"Printed for private distribution."

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 9:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 7-2-97 INITIALS: PB

TRACKING # : 24978

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TOWARD SELF-RELIANCE AND FREEDOM

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TOWARD SELF-RELIANCE AND FREEDOM

VERSES SELECTED

BY

NANCY E. SANKEY-JONES

PRINTED FOR
PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION
1912

These songs of courage have helped me along the way to be "my own man." My purpose in publishing this booklet is, to call attention to these authors as promoters of liberty and to encourage a few friends to solve their problem in freedom, without capitulation.

N. E. S – J.

KEEP A GOIN'

By Frank L. Stanton

EF you strike a thorn or rose,
Keep a goin' !
Ef it hails or ef it snows,
Keep a goin' !
Taint no use to sit and whine,
When the fish ain't on your line,
Bait your hook and 'keep a tryin' !
Keep a goin' !
When the weather kills yer crop,
Keep a goin' !
When you tumble from the top,
Keep a goin' !
S'pose you're out o' every dime,
Bein' so ain't any crime,
Tell the world, your feelin' *prime*,
Keep a goin' !
When it looks like all is up,
Keep a goin' !
Drain the sweetness from the cup,
Keep a goin' !
See the wild birds on the wing,
Hear the bells that sweetly ring,
When you feel like sighin' — *sing*,
Keep a goin' !

IT COULDN'T BE DONE

EDGAR A. GUST

SOMEBODY said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied,
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done—and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that—
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With the lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done—and he did it!

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Then take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done"—and you'll do it.

RESOLVE

CHARLOTTE PERKINS STETSON

To keep my health!
To do my work!
To live!
To see to it I grow and gain and give!
Never to look behind me for an hour!
To wait in weakness, and to walk in power;
But always fronting onward to the light,
Always and always facing toward the right,
Robbed, starved, defeated, fallen, wide astray—
On, with what strength I have!
Back to the way!

DO IT NOW

J. S. CUTLER

DO something for somebody, somewhere,
While jogging along life's road;
Help some one to carry his burden,
And lighter will grow your load.
Do something for somebody gladly,
'Twill sweeten your every care;
In sharing the sorrows of others,
Your own are less hard to bear.

THY BROTHER

John L. Brown

DO not censure, do not chide him,
Tho' his course to you is wrong,
There are forces deeply buried
'Gainst which he has struggled long.

Shackles which he did not fashion,
Thorns that pierce his very soul,
Causing wreck and dire disaster
On the hidden rock and shoal.

If we could but look more deeply,
If the secrets were made plain,
Much that now seems wrong and foolish
Would be wisdom in the main.

Ponder long, with deep contrition,
Think of him in all his pain,
And there'll come to you a vision,
Which will prove the greater gain.

When we come to see our Brother
In the mortals that we meet,
Life will be more worth the living
And our joy will be complete.

THE CALF PATH

Sam Walter Foss

ONE day through the primeval wood
A calf walked home, as good calves should;

But left a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail, as all calves do.

Since then, three hundred years have fled,
And, I infer, the calf is dead.

But still he left behind this trail,
And thereby hangs this mortal tale.

The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that way;

And then a wise bellwether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,

And drew the flock behind him, too,
As good bellwethers always do.

So from that day, o'er hill and glade,
Through those old woods a path was made,

And many men wound in and out,
And bent and turned and dodged about,

And uttered words of righteous wrath,
Because 'twas such a crooked path;

But still they followed — do not laugh —
The first migrations of that calf,

And through this winding woodway stalked
Because he wabbled when he walked.

This forest path became a lane,
That bent and turned and turned again ;

This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse, with his load,

Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
And traveled some three miles in one.

And thus a century and a half
They trod the footsteps of that calf.

The years passed on with swiftness fleet,
The road became a village street,

And this, before men were aware,
A city's crowded thoroughfare.

And soon the central street was this
Of a renowned metropolis.

And men two centuries and a half
Trod in the foot-steps of that calf.

And o'er this crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent.

A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead.

They followed still his crooked way,
And lost one hundred years a day ;

For thus such reverence is lent
To well-established precedent.

A moral lesson this might teach,
Were I ordained and called to preach.

For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf-paths of the mind,

And toil away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done.

They follow in the beaten track,
And out and in, and forth and back,

And still their devious course pursue
To keep the path that others do.

But how the wise old wood-gods laugh
Who saw the first primeval calf !

Ah ! many things this tale might teach —
But I am not ordained to preach.

MY LIBERTY!

ABBY HEDGE CORYELL

THE path is steep,—the way is hard,—but
at the end is, Liberty!
I stumble oft, on bleeding feet,—
I fall, but rise again,
And onward press, mid blinding tears,
My Liberty to gain!

Faint not my heart, nor yet forget,—
No matter what the pain,
'Tis worth the fight, 'tis worth the cost,
Real liberty to gain!

The liberty of Heart and Soul,
The liberty of Brain,—
The liberty of Thought and Speech,—
They must be won thru pain!

But win I must, at any cost
The freedom of my soul;
My freedom means your freedom too,
For Liberty's the goal!

And Liberty can only mean,
That each and all are free,
For one slave means another slave,
And no slaves should there be.

LIBERTY

HENRY BRYAN BINNS

AS first it said, still saith the soul, "I dare;"
Virtue and Prudence and Religion, yea
Love, Friendship, Wisdom, all together say "Beware!"
But unto all the soul replies, "I dare."

"Draw back! Repent!" they cry; "Learn to obey!
Rebel not, venture not! Thy foolish way Forswear."
Humbly answers the soul and says, "I dare."

"Yonder lies all disaster and dismay.
Dar'st thou to summon Madness and dim grey Despair?"
Solemnly, proudly, saith the soul, "I dare."

"A spark of 'God' is mixed into my clay,
Destined I know not whither nor the way; I dare
Only to be mine own self everywhere."

ALMOST A PRAYER

ABBY HEDGE CORYELL

NOT to enslave myself, not to enslave my brother!
Each to be free to live his life, unhampered by the other!
Each to be able to think, each to be able to do
Whatever expresses best in him the "me" or the "you!"
To *grow* to *my best, myself;* to help you if I can;
But at least to be honest and square, as man to man.

Not to put bonds on anyone, *not even* the *babe* at my *knee;*
Just to be free myself, and to leave him free!
And to live the best that is in me, the very best that I *know!*
And to leave you free to *express yourself,* —'tis so *we'll grow.*
So we'll grow and blossom, even as blooms the rose!
Only the free soul blossoms! Only the free soul grows!

THE BEST FRIEND

WILLIAM S. MEAGHER

I'M the best friend that I ever had, I like to sit with me.
I like to sit and tell myself things confidentially,
I often stop and ask me if I shouldn't or I should
And find that my advice to me is always pretty good.
I never got acquainted with myself till here of late;
Just found myself a bully chum; since then it's simply great!
I talk with me, I walk with me, I show me right from wrong.
And really now, you'd be surprised how well we get along.

I never try to cheat me, I'm honest as can be;
No matter what may come and go, I'm on the square with me.
It's great to have a pal, i. e., that's truly all your own,
To be such company for yourself you're never left alone.
You'll try to shun the masses and you'll think the crowd a joke
If you treat yourself one-half as well as you do some other folks.
I've made a study of myself; have compared me with a lot,
To reach this one conclusion: I'm the best friend I have got.

INVICTUS

W. E. HENLEY

OUT of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

THE INDIVIDUAL

RICHARD WIGHTMAN

I WILL obey my light
Though my light be night;
This is the only right.

I will declare my word
Though to the world absurd;
Thus only may I be heard.

I will live out my dream
Though it should folly seem,
And but for me the gleam.

I will pursue my way
(Though no illuming ray)
Eases the toilsome day.

Others may scout the plan,
Wise men my nature ban—
I will be my own man.

THE OLD STOIC

EMILY BRONTÉ

RICHES I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn.

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, "Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me *liberty*."

Yes, as my swift days near their goal
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

DEFYING THE WORLD

LORD BYRON

I HAVE not loved the world nor the world me;
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee—
Nor coined my cheek to smiles—nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo; In the crowd
They would not deem me one of such; I stood
Among them, but not of them, in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filled my mind which thus its self subdued."

"I have not loved the world, nor the world me—
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there may be
Words which are things—hopes which will not deceive—

And virtues which are merciful, nor weave
Snares for the failing; I would also deem
O'er other's griefs that some sincerely grieve;
That two, or one, are almost what they seem—
That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream."

HOW DID YOU DIE?

EDMOND VANCE COOKE

DID you tackle that trouble that came your way,
With a resolute heart and cheerful?
Or hide your face from the light of day,
With a craven soul—and fearful?
Oh, a trouble's a ton—or a trouble's an ounce,
Or a trouble is—what you make it.
And it isn't the fact, that you are hurt, that counts,
But only—how did you take it?

You are beaten to earth. Well, well, what's that?
Come up with a smiling face,
It's nothing against you to fall down flat.
But to lie there, that's a disgrace.
The harder you are thrown—why the higher you bounce,
Be proud of your blackened eye.
It isn't the fact, that you are dead, that counts,
It's how did you fight and—why?

And though you be done to death, what then?
If you battled the best you could;
If you played your part in the world of men,
Why, the critic will call you good.
Death comes with a crawl—or comes with a pounce
And whether he is slow or spry,
It isn't the fact, that you are dead, that counts,
But only—how did you die?

LIFE AND DEATH

ERNEST CROSBY

SO he died for his faith. That is fine—
More than most of us do.
But say, can you add to that line
That he lived for it, too?

In his death be bore witness at last
As a martyr to truth.
Did his life do the same in the past
From the days of his youth?

It is easy to die. Men have died
For a wish or a whim—
From bravado or passion or pride.
Was it harder for him?

But to live: every day to live out
All the truth that he dreamt,
While his friends met his conduct with doubt
And the world with contempt—

Was it thus that he plodded ahead,
  Never turning aside?
Then we'll talk of the life that he led—
  Never mind how he died.

IF

RUDYARD KIPLING

IF you can keep your head when all about you
  Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same,
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with wornout tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginning
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the will which says to them; "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common-touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

THE OUTLAW

ALFRED NOYES

DEEP in the greenwood of my heart
  Is my abiding-place:
I cloak my soul at feast and mart;
  I mask my face.

Outlawed, but not alone, for Truth
  Is outlawed, too.
You cannot banish us, proud world:
  We banish you.

Go by, go by, with all your din,
  Your dust, your greed, your guile,
Your pomp, your gold; you cannot win
  From her one smile.

She sings to me in a lonely place,
  She takes my trembling hand;
I gaze into her lovely face,
  And understand.

Outlawed, but not alone, for Love
  Is outlawed, too.
You cannot banish us, proud world:
  We banish you.

Now, which is outcast, which alone?
  Around us fall and rise
Murmurs of leaf and fern, the moan
  Of paradise.

Outlawed? Then hills and glens and streams
  Are outlawed, too.
Proud world, from our immortal dreams,
  We banish you.

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